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AUTHOR Otto, Robert C.
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ABSTRACT

OBER is the acronym coined by the Newport-Mesa Unified School District to describe its utilization of the System for Objective Based Evaluation-Reading (SOBE-R) developed by the Center for the Study of Evaluation at UCLA. OBER consists of three major components that are designed to facilitate the development and evaluation of the reading programs as defined at the district, school, or teacher level. The components are: (1) The Classification System: six broad reading categories which are sub-divided into sub-categories, sub-category divisions and goals; (2) The Bank of Performance Objectives: consisting of over 800 specific reading objectives, stated in operational form, and keyed to the goals of the classification system; and (3) The Bank of Assessment Items: this will consist of sets of criterion-referenced evaluation items keyed to each of the performance objectives. The five major steps that have been completed in the OBER project are: individual schools selected participants; individual schools selected goals; district goals established from the schools' goals; schools selected performance objectives for each goal; and district composite of performance objectives established. Five appendixes provide the following: Statement of Educational Principles; Goal Selection Form; Performance Objective Selection Form; Performance Objective Tally; and an excerpt from the combined District Composite of Goals and Objectives. (Author/DB)

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OBER

A Program for Objective Based Evaluation in Reading at the Newport-Mesa Unified School District

Robert C. Otto
Development Lab Coordinator
Newport Beach, California

TM 001 490

OBER is the acronym coined by the Newport-Mesa Unified School District to describe its utilization of the System for Objective Based Evaluation-Reading (SOBE-R) developed by the Center for the Study of Evaluation at UCLA.

Whereas other implementations have been at the state (Florida) and individual school (Eastridge, Denver, Colorado), the implementation in the N-MUSD has been both by individual schools of the District and by the District as a whole. The remainder of this paper will deal with this dual implementation and the problems and benefits related to such an endeavor.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Newport-Mesa Unified School District is a K-12 district in its sixth year of unification, serving 26,000 students from the Southern California communities of Costa Mesa and Newport Beach. During the early stages of unification it was decided that the District would develop and utilize a decentralized form of management, placing the responsibility for program implementation and outcome at the school level. Decentralization was interpreted by many in the District as meaning that the school and teacher not only had the authority to teach "how" they wanted but "what" they wanted. This interpretation of decentralization was acceptable until a District philosophy that identified common "whats" was adopted. Even with the adoption of an Interim Statement of Educational Principles, the myth persisted that the local school had complete freedom to determine "what" the desired outcomes of the instructional program should be. There was little effort by the District to formally implement the Interim Statement of Educational Principles - and thus the persistence of the myth.

With the adoption in June, 1970, of the current Statement of Educational Principles and the development of an overall plan for its implementation, work began on establishing those program outcomes that would be common throughout the District. It is not the intent, nor is it considered feasible at the District level, to describe all the "whats" for instruction in the District as needs will vary between groups. Recognition that each school, group of students, and an individual student will have goals and objectives that differ in scope and sequence is contained in the current Statement of Educational Principles.[1] An excerpt is provided below.

> That each student is to make reasonable progress in each school subject, each year in which he is enrolled or participating.
>
> > Criteria for reasonable progress are to be established for each student based upon total past performance unless past performance is unrealistic.
> >
> > Progress is defined as increments of improvement in skill and knowledge toward individual school and district goals and objectives.
> >
> > School subjects are structured areas of skills and knowledge.
> >
> > > Skills include reading, composition, listening, speaking, computation, doing and thinking.
> > >
> > > Knowledge includes language systems, mathematical systems, science, social studies, fine and practical arts.

The need to obtain and report on the progress made by students and on program outcomes was also identified by the District and included in its Statement of Educational Principles as shown below.

> That progress will be determined through District, school and teacher assessment data.
>
> > Valid, reliable and representative samples of intellectual behavior will be gained through assessment tools of reasonable standardization.

1 Note: A copy of the complete Statement of Educational Principles is contained in Appendix A.

That progress will be reported to all concerned.

Parents and students will be furnished with information as to how students are doing.

Community, Board, and staff will be furnished with information as to how well schools are doing.

At the time of the adoption of the Statement of Educational Principles, the District and most schools had no definition of their goals and objectives and had no adequate means for assessing student progress or program success. The data received from the state mandated testing program and supplemented by the District testing program had little, if any, influence on the decision-making process of the District or on the curriculum being offered in the schools.

OTHER FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SELECTION OF OBER

As pointed out above, decision makers in the District attempting to assess the value of instructional programs or the progress of students have had to rely upon information provided primarily by norm-referenced tests. The District, schools within the District, and teachers are concerned with determining the extent to which students are achieving objectives relevant to their needs. Norm-referenced tests are of little use for this purpose since they provide data based on normative rather than criterion scores, contain content that matches only to a limited degree with the particular objectives of the District, school, and teacher, and tend to measure generalized skills or aptitudes not influenced by short-term instructional sequences. In addition, the statement that "each student is to make reasonable progress in each school subject each year in which he is enrolled or participating," is an appealing philosophy that is not currently defined in operational terms, nor does norm-referenced testing appear to be an acceptable means for determining reasonable progress.

Norm-referenced tests have these and many other shortcomings when applied to the evaluation of instructional programs and student progress. The District now believes that such tests provide information grossly inadequate for regulating the instructional process or for evaluating the success of the programs. It is the intent of the District to ultimately replace norm-referenced testing in most, if not all, applications to the evaluation of Instruction in the District.

OBER AND ITS COMPONENTS

OBER became one of the first major means to assist the District with the implementation of its Statement of Educational Principles. By selecting OBER the District hopes to accomplish the following:

1. Provide a means of implementing the Statement of Educational Principles in the area of reading.
2. Enable individual schools to establish a reading curriculum based on performance objectives that is appropriate for their students and their unique characteristics.
3. Free staff from spending unnecessary time writing school's goals and performance objectives in reading.
4. Provide the District and individual schools with an assessment program in reading based upon criterion-referenced measures.
5. Replace norm-referenced achievement testing as the primary means of determining program success.
6. Enable the District and individual schools to determine the adequacy of the reading instructional program at each level.
7. Help the District and individual schools determine areas of the reading program that require improvement.

OBER consists of three major components that are designed to facilitate the development and evaluation of the reading programs as defined at the District, school or teacher level. OBER is an attempt to provide the tools for determining the objectives of the reading program and for its subsequent assessment. The components are:

1. The Classification System: This consists of six broad reading categories which are sub-divided into sub-categories, sub-category divisions and goals.

2. The Bank of Performance Objectives: This consists of over 800 specific reading objectives, stated in operational form, and keyed to the goals of the classification system. These objectives, written at the Center for the Study of Evaluation, were the result of an extensive survey of the field of reading.

3. The Bank of Assessment Items: This will consist of sets of criterion-referenced evaluation items keyed to each of the performance objectives. These items are currently being developed by the Center and the District.

IMPLEMENTATION OF OBER

In April, 1971, each of the 37 schools in the District were given an opportunity to participate in the OBER project. Thirty-three of the schools elected to participate in the initial task of identifying those goals and performance objectives on which the District and schools wanted assessment information. To date there have been five major steps completed in the OBER project. Information on each of the steps is summarized below:

.1 Individual schools selected participants.

Each elementary school selected a teacher from each grade level as well as, in some cases, the principal and/or a reading specialist to participate in the selection of goals and performance objectives. The middle and high schools each selected up to six teachers to participate. Released time or recompense was provided for each teacher participating. In all, substitutes for 298 days and $3,276 of recompense for evening and weekend work were provided for the involvement of 206 teachers in the selection of reading goals and objectives.

.2 Individual schools selected goals.

Each school team met for a day to select goals for defining its reading program. The teams used a common goal selection form, an example of the Goal Selection Form is included in Appendix B. Every school was asked to decide (1) if each of the respective goals was appropriate for 85 percent or more of the students at a given grade level and (2) if the

school desired assessment information about the reading program's success in reaching the goal. An E, S, N and I designation scheme was used by the schools to indicate where assessment should or should not be carried out for a given goal. The meanings of the E, S, N and I are as follows:

1. E - Essential for this grade level
2. S - Supplementary for this grade level
3. N - Not appropriate for this grade level
4. I - Irrelevant to reading

In all, 196 goals were considered for selection at each grade, K-12. In order to facilitate articulation between levels, the elementary schools selected goals for grades K-6, the middle schools for grades 6-8, and the high schools for grades 8-12. At the completion of this step, each school had its own set of written reading goals, which was a first for many of the schools.

Overall reaction to the goal selection process was excellent. However, some staffs were concerned that the District was requiring each school to have grade-level curriculums rather than a reading curriculum based on continuous progress. This was not the intent since grade levels were selected only as a common reference point. Some staffs had difficulty in working with the initial goals due to the number of variables with which they had to become familiar. These included the double selection criteria of appropriateness of the goal for 85 percent of the students and a need for feedback data, the E, S, N, and I designations, the grade level being considered and the reading classification system of categories, sub-categories, and sub-category divisions.

.3 District goals established from the schools' goals.

The goals selected by each school were reported to the District via the goal selection form. The schools' inputs were tallied and from that tally the District set of Essential

and Supplemental goals was identified. Criteria for the inclusion of a goal in the District Composite were established and applied by the District's Development Lab. The District Composite of goals, based upon school input, was returned to the schools in two weeks from the time the individual school inputs were received. Without the availability of talented and dedicated staff, more than two weeks should be allowed for tabulation, printing, and distribution of the District goals.

.4 Schools selected performance objectives for each goal.

The forms used for reporting the District's Composite of reading goals were also used as a means for recording the schools' selections of performance objectives. Each school team was asked to select or write at least one performance objective for each goal included in the District Composite as Essential or Supplemental as well as for goals they had previously selected but which had not been included in the District Composite. Schools had the option to delete or to retain a goal in the school's set of goals after reviewing the input of the other schools.

In the selection of objectives, the teams were again asked to use the double selection criteria of appropriateness for 85 percent of the students and assessment information desired concerning the reading program's success in reaching a given objective. Selected objectives were indicated by a "yes" and others by a "no". An example of a Performance Objective Selection Form is included in Appendix C. Participants were asked to transfer their previous goal classification of Essential or Supplemental to the objective selection sheet. This was a necessary step but perhaps could be eliminated in the future by using one selection form rather than separate goal and objective selection forms.

Participants found the objective selection procedure more demanding but reacted favorably to the task. Goal selection took a day per team but the objective selection process required one and one-half days, which was one-half day more than the time estimated. Upon completion of this step, each school had established a set of reading goals and objectives unique to its students and their characteristics.

For a number of schools and staffs this was their first exposure to performance objectives and some felt that if they selected a particular objective they would be held accountable for it. The fact that some of the objective statements do not meet the criteria for a performance objective was a concern to some of the members of those staffs that had previously worked with performance objectives.

.5 District Composite of performance objectives established.

As was the case in the formation of the composite of goals, the inputs from the schools were tallied and used as the basis for determining inclusion or non-inclusion of a given objective in the District Composite. In the formation of the goals' composite, available computer technology was not used which, in retrospect, was a mistake. In the tallying of the performance objectives, school inputs were tallied and screened via a computer program. An example of the output for an objective is shown in Appendix D.

The number of goals and performance objectives included in the District Composite at each grade level as Essential is shown below:

Grade Level	Number of Essential Goals	Number of Essential Objectives
K	22	58
1	38	120
2	47	160
3	53	182
4	41	102
5	43	121
6	47	130
7	73	203
8	66	150
9	44	156
10	36	120
11	28	84
12	25	70

The combined District Composite of Goals and Objectives was distributed to the schools in the fall of 1971. An excerpt from the 266 page document is included in Appendix E. One of the shortcomings of the District Composite was its sheer size. Thus, after resolving the goal and objective mismatches that existed following the first selections, grade level books consisting only of Essential Goals and Objectives for a given grade were produced and distributed to teachers. The grade level Composites have been well received by the staffs and are seen by many as less threatening.

THE PRESENT AND FUTURE

The utilization of the OBER process to date has enabled the District to establish goals and performance objectives for each grade level in the area of reading. The inter and intra-school articulation of reading has been greatly enhanced and the OBER process has become a model for development of the other eleven areas in the Statement of Educational Principles.

During the 1971-72 school year work has been initiated on the development of an assessment system to accompany the selected goals and objectives. The first stage of this assessment system will be used during June, 1972, to gather District-wide data on the reading program for students in grades 1, 3, 5, 8 and 11. Further development of reading assessment items during 1972-73 will enable individual schools to select assessment items to be used in their assessment programs that are congruent with the objectives they establish for their students during a given instructional time.

The development, implementation, evaluation and revision of the assessment system has been and will continue to be a demanding task. Suggestions and questions on both the development of the assessment bank and the delivery of the items to the end user are encouraged and solicited. Such suggestions and questions as well as questions on the selection of goals and objectives should be directed to the Development Lab, Newport-Mesa Unified School District, P. O. Box 1368, Newport Beach, California, 92663.

APPENDIX A

Statement of Educational Principles

POLICY

STATEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The total education of the student results from the combined efforts of home, church, and total community. The Board of Education assumes the primary responsibility for the maximum intellectual development of all students, including development of the ability to apply intellect to the problems of citizenship in our democratic society. The Board recognizes, however, that if the education is to be complete, the efforts of other community institutions must be supported and reinforced. Thus, the Board shares responsibility for physical, social-emotional, cultural (esthetic values) and ethical-moral development of students with other community efforts.

Statement of Educational Principles

1. That the total education of youth is shared among home, church, school, and other community organizations.

2. That the areas of shared responsibility for student development are physical development, social development, emotional development, cultural and ethical/moral development.

3. That the schools' primary responsibility is the maximum intellectual development of youth.

4. That each school is responsible for the educational progress of each student attending.

5. That each student is to make reasonable progress in each school subject, each year in which he is enrolled or participating.

   Criteria for reasonable progress are to be established for each student based upon total past performance unless past performance is unrealistic.

   Progress is defined as increments of improvement in skill and knowledge toward individual school and district goals and objectives.

   School subjects are structured areas of skills and knowledge.

      Skills include reading, composition, listening, speaking, computation, doing, and thinking.

      Knowledge includes language systems, mathematical systems, science, social studies, fine and practical arts.

Statement of Educational Principles

6. That progress will be determined through District, school, and teacher assessment data.

Valid, reliable, and representative samples of intellectual behavior will be gained through assessment tools of reasonable standardization.

7. That progress will be reported to all concerned.

Parents and students will be furnished with information as to how students are doing.

Community, Board, and staff will be furnished with information as to how well schools are doing.

NOTE: It is recognized that many of the tools and procedures necessary for full implementation and evaluation of the Statement of Educational Principles are yet to be developed, tested, and refined. Therefore, realization of these principles is expected to move from the current status to complete implementation in an orderly process.

Each year the District and individual schools will develop a set of goals, objectives, and plans which incorporate these educational principles.

First Reading: 5-19-70

Policy
Adopted: 6-16-70

APPENDIX B

Goal Selection Form

E = Essential at This Grade Level
S - Supplementary for This Grade Level
N = Not Appropriate at This Grade Level
I = Irrelevant to Reading

GOALS	K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
IA1a. Differentiate likenesses and differences in sounds.	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I
IA1b. Identify common environmental sounds.	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I
IA1c. Differentiate directions and sources of sounds.	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I
IA1d. Distinguish among sound characteristics.	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I
IA1e. Specify the number of syllables in words.	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I
IA2a. Listen for a series.	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I
IA2b. Recall and follow directions.	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I
IA2c. Listen for specific details.	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I
IA3a. Imitate sounds.	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I
IA3b. Repeat oral selections.	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I
IA3c. Repeat variations in pitch, stress, and juncture.	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I
IA4a. Listen for main ideas.	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I
IA4b. Listen for details.	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I
IA4c. Identify sequence.	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I
IA4d. Interpret descriptive language.	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I	E S N I

APPENDIX C

Performance Objective Selection Form

Code: IA1a

Goal: Differentiate likenesses and differences in sounds

	GRADE						
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
DISTRICT ESSENTIAL	●	●	●				
DISTRICT SUPPLEMENTAL				●			
SCHOOL ESSENTIAL							
SCHOOL SUPPLEMENTAL							
1. Given pairs of sounds (e.g., environmental sounds, musical tones, familiar voices, words), the learner will identify those pairs that are identical and those that are not identical.	yes no	yes no	yes no	yes no	yes no	yes no	yes no
2. Given pairs of sounds, the learner will identify those that are of the same or of different duration.	yes no	yes no	yes no	yes no	yes no	yes no	yes no

Code	Goal	GRADE						
IAle	Specify the number of syllables in words	K	1	2	3	4	5	6
DISTRICT ESSENTIAL				●	●	●	●	●
DISTRICT SUPPLEMENTAL			●					
SCHOOL ESSENTIAL								
SCHOOL SUPPLEMENTAL								
1. Given a word orally, the learner will specify the number of syllables it contains.		yes no	yes no	yes no	yes no	yes no	yes no	yes no

APPENDIX D

Performance Objective Tally

GOAL: 1A1E
OBJECTIVE 1

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
ADAMS	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BALEARIC	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BAY VIEW	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
BEAR STREET	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
CALIFORNIA	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CANYON	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
COLLEGE PARK	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
CORONA DEL MAR	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
HARPER	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
KILLYBROOKE	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
LINDBERGH	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
MARINERS	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
MESA VERDE	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MONTE VISTA	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
NEWPORT	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
NEWPORT HEIGHTS	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
PAULARINO	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
POMONA	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
PRESIDIO	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
SONORA	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
VICTORIA	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
WHITTIER	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
WOODLAND	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DAVIS	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
ENSIGN	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
KAISER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LINCOLN	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
REA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEWINKLE	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CDM H. S.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
COSTA MESA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
ESTANCIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
HARBOR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DISTRICT	3	19	21	22	23	22	23	4	6	1	1	1	1

OBJECTIVE SUMMARY

NO-K	YES-7
YES-1	YES-8
YES-2	NO-9
YES-3	NO-10
YES-4	NO-11
YES-5	NO-12
YES-6	

APPENDIX E

Code: IVA1

Goal: Identify main ideas and major concepts

GRADE

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
DISTRICT ESSENTIAL				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
DISTRICT SUPPLEMENTAL		●	●										
SCHOOL ESSENTIAL													
SCHOOL SUPPLEMENTAL													
1. The learner will select or write a title for an untitled reading selection.	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
2. The learner will identify the main ideas and major concepts of a selection.	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
3. The learner will summarize a selection or passage he has just read.	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
4. Given the main ideas of a selection, the learner will identify ideas subordinate to each main idea.	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
5. The learner will paraphrase a given passage.	no	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
6. Given a reading selection, the learner will identify key words, phrases or passages important to the meaning of the selection.	no	no	no	no	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes